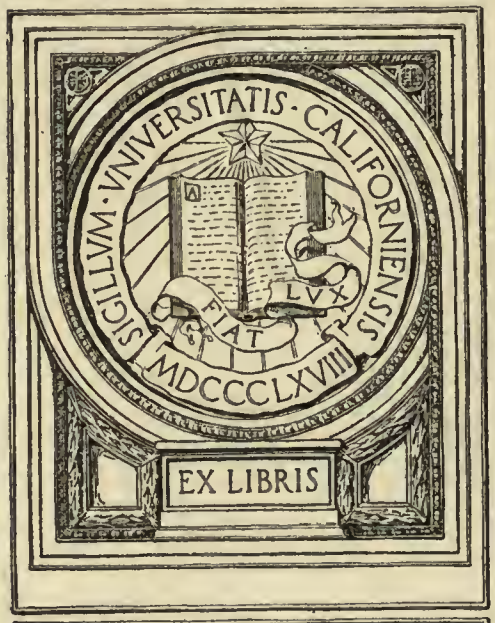
GIFT OF


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
LVX
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/memorandumonprov00redcrich

Memorandum on Provision for Disabled Soldiers in New Zealand

There has been established in New Zealand a special department of the government to obtain suitable employment for the returned soldier and also, by any other means, to assist in his re-adaptation to civilian life. As most of the men discharged from the forces up to the present time are those who have been invalided home from the front, it follows that the major activity of the Discharged Soldiers' Information Department has been looking out for the welfare of crippled and disabled men.

The New Zealanders have laid special stress on the importance of getting in touch with every single returning man, inquiring regarding his situation, and offering such assistance as is available. To this end arrangements were made for representatives of the Department to board each incoming transport, and to obtain in preliminary form from the men themselves the items of information desired for record. Later on this system was further improved through arranging to have the principal data listed by the military authorities on board the transports while still at sea. The information is then completed by the Department's officers upon arrival in port, and the cards for the central register are written up without delay.

An important factor in the Department's work is the chain of local committees.[1] The personnel of these committees is drawn, almost without exception, from influential citizens who are officers or members of the local patriotic societies. In fact the committees are often sub-committees of these societies, and if not in this relation, are in most intimate touch with them. Knowing the resources and opportunities in their home community, the members of a local committee are able intelligently to advise regarding the course of action in an individual case under discussion.

The man, when first listed, is as yet undischarged and therefore still under the jurisdiction of the Defense Department. So after advice regarding the home-coming man is forwarded informally to the local patriotic organization, his card is filed in the central register of the Returned Soldiers' Information Department under the classification 'not ready for action'.

The military authorities notify the Department a few days in advance of a man's discharge from the strength, and arrangements are thereupon made to have him personally interviewed. The local police officials are often delegated with the duty of this visit. The interviewer is provided with a blank report to fill out, and with a circular of information to give to the soldier. He is cautioned that the inquiries should be made in a sympathetic spirit, in order that there may be formed a true estimate of the man's needs and merits.

The form calls for answers to the following inquiries:

To be answered in all cases.

1. Name and address of soldier.
   Is the man of good character?
   Are his surroundings respectable?
   Is he living with relatives or with whom?
2. Is he in good health or is he still suffering from disease or wounds?
3. Is he fit for employment, and, if so, has he obtained employment, and what are his wages? If he has not does he desire em-

[1] To date local committees have been established in the following communities throughout the dominion: Whangerei, Dargaville, Auckland, Hamilton, Cambridge, Thames, Paeroa, Waihi, Te Aroha, Rotorua, Tauranga, Opotiki, Te Awamutu, Te Kuiti, Taumarunui, Taihape, Marton, Feilding, Palmerston North, Taranaki, Wanganui, Gisborne, Napier, Hastings, Dannevirke, Pahiatua, Wairarapa, Wellington, Blenheim, Nelson, Westport, Greymouth, Hokitika, Christchurch, Ashburton, Timaru, Oamaru, Dunedin, and Southland.

ployment, and, if so, what kind of employment does he wish for?

4. What are his means outside his wages?
5. Has he received assistance from any patriotic society, etc.? and, if so, give amounts and dates.
6. Is he receiving full military pay?
7. Have you handed the man the information leaflet enclosed herewith?

To be answered in cases of men at present incapacitated but likely to make a good recovery.

8. When is he likely to be sound and well and ready for work?
9. Is he desirous of present employment, and, if so, what work could he undertake?
10. What employment is he desirous of undertaking when restored to health?

To be answered in cases of men permanently disabled by sickness or wounds.

11. What is the nature of his disablement?
12. What employment do you think the man is capable of?
13. What are his own ideas on the subject?
14. If unemployable, in what way do you think he could be best assisted?
15. Has he applied for a war pension? If a war pension has been granted what is the amount?

If the man does not require the Department's assistance please obtain his signature here.

I do *not* require the Department's assistance in obtaining employment.

[Signature]

Any other information which interviewing officer can supply.

[Signature]

[Date]

Very naturally, a considerable number of the men do not require specific assistance. They may have a business or a farm to return to, or be in possession of private means. Others are found to be already employed or to have had employment promised them. In such cases the man's record card is transferred to the 'disposed of' section of the register.

The records of men who are under curative treatment and are not yet ready for employment are filed temporarily in the 'under action' section of the register. Except in instances of systematic neglect to reply to communications, a case is not abandoned until employment shall have been obtained or the office definitely informed that its assistance is not required.

Any inquiries on the part of the men regarding land settlement or pensions are referred to the departments of the government having these matters under jurisdiction.

Cases where the men have applied for or inquired regarding employment are regarded as active. In seeking positions to meet these demands every possible agency is employed.

The Department has conducted a propaganda to secure preference in employment opportunity for returned men. It has communicated with local authorities, patriotic organizations, farmers' unions, and private employers and has found the response, on the whole, extremely favorable. The Government has instructed all the departments that ex-members of the expeditionary force are to be given preference for all vacancies which they are qualified to fill. The local Labor Offices act on the same principle. In result a great many men have been appointed by the Public Service Commissioner or secured employment by the branches of the Labor Department. The Railway Department has helped to the best of its ability, but has itself been under necessity of providing for its own former employees who have returned disabled from the front.

The man desirous of obtaining employment is instructed to get in touch with the local committee in his home district. The case is then charged against the committee on the record of the department. If necessary, there are sent periodical reminders inquiring regarding progress, and advising of any apparently suitable vacancies which have come to the knowledge of the central office. The Department communicates to the committees all offers of employment which come to its notice. In the case of new offers it makes an inspection of the cases charged against the committee in the locality where the

work is available, and telegraphs this committee directing attention to any men who seem suitable candidates for the vacancies.

The Department keeps a double card index of the men awaiting employment. One set of cards is classified according to occupation; a second according to district of residence. Offers of employment are likewise suitably indexed.

A statement indicating the number of candidates for employment in each district is sent out weekly to the local committees. This serves as a check on their number of open cases, and incites friendly rivalry between the committees to keep down the number charged against them.

Up to June 21, 1917, the total number of men who had been registered by the Department was 9,070. This number included the general type of invalid as well as the men physically disabled. The cases were subject to the following classification:

Cases disposed of. Placed in employment, returned to military duty, or their old employment, or signed a statement that they do not require the Department's assistance	7,298
Cases under action. Department making inquiries on the soldier's behalf or awaiting notice of discharge	881
Cases not ready for action. Men recently returned to New Zealand, now convalescing, not ready for employment, or not yet discharged by the military authorities	692
Open cases. Men for whom employment is desired	199
Total	*9,070*

The results in an effort to provide special training or re-education for disabled men have not, on the whole, been encouraging. Although the opportunities are brought systematically to the attention of the men, the response has been indifferent. But the work is as yet new, and there are several factors that seem in some degree to account for the situation.

For agricultural training, arrangements have been made with the Agricultural Department to accept a limited number of men for instruction at the state farms. Among the various branches of farm work are dairying, fruit-farming, cropping, poultry raising, bee culture, and market gardening. In scientific training in agricultural and pastoral subjects the authorities of Lincoln College, Wellington, have placed at the disposal of ex-soldiers five scholarships of £20 each, and have agreed to take non-resident pupils at a nominal fee. In deserving cases the Returned Soldiers' Information Department is prepared to supplement the scholarship grants by an adequate annual allowance. Few soldiers have taken advantage of the opportunities for agricultural training.

Clerical training for disabled soldiers is being provided free of expense to the government or the men by the New Zealand Society of Accountants. The subjects covered are those prescribed for the Society's bookkeeping examination. The examination fees of pupils prepared to sit at the university examinations in accountancy are also met by the Society. In addition to the classroom instruction courses are also given by correspondence for the benefit of men who cannot attend in person.

According to the annual report of the Returned Soldiers' Information Department, "a considerable number of men have from time to time entered for the classes, but it is understood that with few exceptions the attendance has been desultory and the progress poor, and it has lately been intimated to the Department by the secretary that the council of the Society is now considering whether it is justified in continuing the expenditure of some hundreds of pounds for such unsatisfactory results. The matter is unquestionably one for very profound regret, the scheme having originally been adopted by the Society on its own initiative, and promising, as we all hoped, very valuable developments."

For disabled men who cannot return to their former occupations there is offered free tuition at various technical schools throughout New Zealand. At the Wellington Technical College, for example, instruction is provided in building construction, painting, decoration and sign-writing, carpentry and joinery, plumbing, machine work, jewelry making, metal work, plastering, and modelling. At other instruction centers there are different curricula. In June, 1917, sixty-

nine men were taking training at technical schools.

By arrangement with the Jubilee Institute for the Blind training is provided for men partially or totally blinded at the front.

To remove any possible financial obstacle to men desiring to undertake training, the government some time ago decided to grant maintenance allowances not in excess of £1 a week—irrespective of pension payments—to men attending classes. These allowances are conditioned only upon approval of the training subject as suitable to the individual case and upon good conduct, regular attendance, and satisfactory progress.

Related to the question of training for men unable to follow their former trade is that of allowing disabled men to accept positions with private employers at rates of pay less than those fixed by current awards or agreements and minimum wage legislation. The subject was taken up by the Labor Department early in 1916, and under an order-in-council then approved, fourteen under-rate permits prescribing weekly wages of from £2 10*s* to £1 15*s* have been issued.

The establishment of special re-educational institutions for war cripples has been urged by various individuals and organizations. The recommendation has elicited from the minister in charge of the Returned Soldiers' Information Department the following comment:

> During the last few weeks the question of the establishment of special training colleges for disabled men has been urged on the attention of the Department. The gentlemen concerned in this movement have shown most praiseworthy interest in the welfare of our returned men, and which, in so far as it manifests a lively interest in our soldiers, must command the sympathy and respect of us all. I gather from the correspondence which has come under my notice that the promoters of the scheme have in mind the provision of training colleges and farms for men still undergoing hospital treatment, and if this is correct the question more properly appertains to the work of the Department of Public Health than to the Discharged Soldiers' Information Department. So far as the latter Department is concerned, I regret that I cannot at present see my way to support a scheme of the character suggested. The small extent to which existing facilities have been availed of would not, in my opinion, justify the large expense which the institution of special training colleges with expensive buildings, apparatus, and staff would involve. I am supported in this view by the attitude taken up by the Statutory War Pensions Committee, which has been established by legislation in the United Kingdom, and which amongst other functions deals with the training and employment of disabled men. In addressing its local committees on this particular subject it urges them to make use as far as possible of existing institutions, specifically mentioning the technical schools, and adds that "as the number of men for whom training is needed will diminish year by year after the war, expenditure on the provision of buildings and apparatus, which will only be required for a temporary period, should be kept within strict limits."
>
> In addition to the foregoing, I doubt whether an institution of the character proposed, involving a considerable measure of control and discipline, would be appreciated by the men for whose benefit it is designed. I am inclined to think that the younger men would before very long find the necessary restraint distasteful and irksome. In this opinion I am supported by the views of a prominent member of the medical profession in New Zealand—one who I may say has had special opportunities of forming an opinion through daily contact with the inmates of one of our large convalescent homes. Speaking on this very subject of a training college for men out of or nearly out of the doctor's hands, he says, "I am a little dubious as to whether the men would be content to remain long under institutional control;" and again, "I feel sure that the feeling of independence from control, impossible in any institution, is an essential factor in any scheme designed to appeal to the average man, and not to the exceptional returned man." I am entirely in accord with these views, and for the reasons given I could not, for the present at any rate, see my way to support the schemes which have been put forward.

While the experience in the matter of training has been disappointing the results in obtaining employment for disabled men have been unusually successful. The latter may go far to explain the former, especially in view of the great present demand for labor in New Zealand, and the natural desire on the part of the men to get back at once to remunerative and productive occupation.

The amount of pension award, based as it is on medical evidence as to physical condition, is a

fair criterion of the extent of disability. A tabulation has been prepared showing the number of men drawing pensions of £1 5*s* per week and upward for whom the Returned Soldiers' Information Department obtained remunerative employment. As loss of sight in one eye carries with it a pension of £1 per week it is evident that the range of pensions represented in the tabulation embrace only cases of grave disability. A summary of this tabulation gives the following totals:

Weekly Pension	*Number of Placements*
£1 5*s* 0*d*	80
£1 10*s* 0*d*	146
£1 5*s* 0*d*	47

In some amputation cases the placement results were as follows:

Pension	*Amputation*	*Employment*
£1 15*s* 0*d*	Left thigh	Artificial limb making
£1 15*s* 0*d*	Right arm	Storeman
£1 15*s* 0*d*	Left foot	Draftsman
£1 15*s* 0*d*	Left knee	Artificial limb making
£1 15*s* 0*d*	Right arm	Night watchman
£1 15*s* 0*d*	Left arm	Fruit farming
£1 15*s* 0*d*	Right leg	Clerk
£1 15*s* 0*d*	Left leg	Night exchange attendant
£1 10*s* 0*d*	Right foot	Land officer
£1 10*s* 0*d*	Leg	Mechanic
£1 10*s* 0*d*	Right foot	Basket-maker
£1 10*s* 0*d*	Left leg	Clerical position
£1 5*s* 0*d*	Two fingers	Messenger

To Hon. A. L. Herdman, the minister in charge of the Returned Soldiers' Information Department, I am indebted for the information and documentary material on which this memorandum is based.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
BERKELEY

Return to desk from which borrowed.
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

DEC 2 1947

DEC 15 1947

14Apr'49HJ

MAY 8 1967 9,4

RECEIVED
APR 24 '67 -10 AM
LOAN DEPT

REC'D LD JUL

MAY 9 1987

AUTO DISC MAY 3 1987

AUG 6 1970 8 0

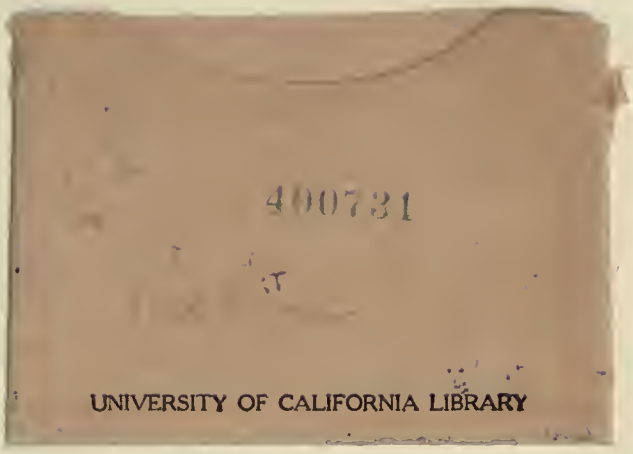
G 0 2 1994

L 27 '94

LD 21-100m-9,'47(A5702s16)476

NOV

U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES
B003017083


400731
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY